BENEFITS OF LEARNING GERMAN AS A SECOND COMPULSORY FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

It is never too early to start learning a language: it is fun, it promotes healthy development and many more cognitive and social benefits that last a lifetime. There are a number of reasons and benefits why learning German as a second language puts the child himself ahead of other children. Parents can also be of great help here, whether they know German or not. Numerous studies show that children who learn a second language, such as German, have an advantage from the very beginning. Experts have found that learning a foreign language has its benefits for brain health, due to the fact that it can be a very useful hobby for our health, because it encourages an increase in gray matter. Another of the many benefits of learning a second language is the fact that it opens up a whole new world of career opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

"Knowing a second language is like having a second soul" - Carlo the Great

Until recently, people thought that if a person knew two languages, it could create confusion in his mind. So, there was one paradigm and it was thought that it would be better to know one or two languages perfectly, because they would probably mix. Another more extreme and absurd view was that learning two languages could cause some kind of schizophrenia or separation. Some research has gone so far as to support the idea that learning two languages can be a problem; Early researchers found that bilinguals had lower vocabulary and slower access to words. However, these myths today are overshadowed by many modern studies, the results of which show the incredible psychological benefits of learning a second language.

Cognitive and social benefits of learning languages in early childhood

Numerous studies show that children who study a second language have an advantage from the very beginning. According to psychologists, children who learn another language before the age of five use the same part of the brain that serves them to learn their mother tongue. Younger students are unfamiliar with the fear of making mistakes, where the case is not the same and which can be a real obstacle for older beginners. The length of time a student can devote to language learning has a direct and positive correlation with cognitive development. Longer courses also give students the opportunity to grow along with additional language and culture,
developing a deeper connection as they mature. Furthermore, research shows that learning a second language enhances problem-solving skills, critical thinking and listening, as well as improving memory, concentration, and multitasking. Children who are proficient in other languages also show signs of increased creativity and mental flexibility. The cognitive benefits of learning a foreign language have a direct impact on a child's academic achievement. Compared to those without additional language, bilingual children have better reading, writing and math skills and generally get higher scores on standardized tests. Children who are exposed to other languages early on show more positive attitudes toward the cultures associated with those languages. Experience with language learning enables and introduces them to the world in ways that you would not otherwise experience.

Whether parents speak two languages or this is their first experience with another language, their support will make a huge difference in a child's success. They do not have to speak fluently the language their child is learning to create an encouraging and active learning environment. It is enough to provide as many opportunities for authentic experiences and the many online tools and resources available to them.

**Learning a second foreign language improves brain function**

Through numerous studies, experts have come to the conclusion that learning a foreign language has its benefits for brain health. Learning a second language can be a very useful hobby for our health, as it increases gray mass. This finding was made by a group of scientists from the University of Medicine in Innsbruck, Austria, who tried to find out what effect foreign language learning has on brain well-being, both in people with multiple sclerosis and in those who are healthy. Twenty-three participants took part in the experiment, taking an eight-week English course, which they attended three hours a week. The study found that there was no difference between the two groups of subjects in terms of comprehension, speech fluency and learned words. Each of the students also underwent magnetic resonance screening before and after the course. The results showed that in the case of people suffering from multiple sclerosis, there was an increase in gray mass in the hippocampus, which affects short-term memory, as well as the basic ganglia, which affects learning ability, and parahippocampus, which affects coping in space. In healthy people, however, there has been an increase in gray mass in areas of cognitive function, self-awareness, emotion control, and motor function.

Other research has shown that language centers in the brain grow as a result of successful language learning. Those who study better grow these vital areas. Bilingualism delays Alzheimer's disease in people at potential risk for up to five years. It sounds incredible, but research continues to support this result. If a person is bilingual, then they have improved listening skills, because the brain has to work harder to distinguish other types of sounds in two or more languages. Babies living in a bilingual family can distinguish languages they have never heard before. Just because they are exposed to other sounds helps them to distinguish between German and French. Babies living in a bilingual environment have a stronger memory than those who did not grow up in such an environment, that is, they grew up with only one language. This means that they are better at calculating, reading and other important skills.

Cognitive increases, such as better attention span and multitasking, are due to the fact that bilinguals have activated both languages at the same time and must constantly see which is more appropriate. All this going back and forth, brings mental benefits. Because learning a
second language draws attention to abstract rules and the structure of the language, it can improve the first language.

**Benefits of learning German as a second language in the future**

Learning a second language, such as German or even more, is not only profitable in today's world, but also necessary. International students studying abroad, learning their language at school and gaining a foundation are of great importance. Profitability is mirrored by a new scientific language and the way in which people speak a language they understand. In addition, there is a sense of pride in being able to communicate with people of different races and cultures in their mother tongue. The reasons as well as the benefits of learning German as a second language are innumerable, but the most important are the following:

- The world is changing rapidly and many companies are choosing to open branches in several locations around the world. You have to be a globally-oriented person who speaks another foreign language. Many companies come to our country that come from Germany, so knowledge of the German language is a great advantage when applying and getting a job.

- Learning a new language is quite complex. It adheres to a whole new complicated system of rules, structures and vocabulary. In this way, our brain must work harder, understand the new meaning of words and help in verbal communication, develop cognitive thinking and problem-solving skills.

- If we are a person who wants to meet and interact with new people, then learning a new language should be our priority. When we learn new languages, the doors of opportunity to socialize around the world are open to us. Nothing increases the thirst for adventure in several countries more than the ability to communicate in key foreign languages. We will better understand the history of people, music, fashion, and literature, when we can read, write, and communicate in their language.

- When mastering a foreign language, we are better off making better decisions. Researchers at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona support the emotional distance as a term for mastering a foreign language. Their studies suggest that the use of a foreign language makes people more utilitarian, which in turn leads to better decision-making.

- If we understand the language in one place we visit, it is easier for us to fit into their culture, to wear clothes, and to behave like the people there. This will be useful in places where tourists are easy prey or targets of fraudsters. It is this fact that will make our visit exciting and naturally lead us to make new friends.

**Conclusion**

As mentioned earlier, research suggests that children who are learning a second language have an advantage over other children from the very beginning. According to psychologists, children who learn another language before the age of five use the same part of the brain that serves them to learn their mother tongue. Children who are exposed to other languages early on show more positive attitudes toward the cultures associated with those languages. Experience with language learning introduces them to the world in ways they would not otherwise experience. The depth of knowledge that comes with mastering a new language, strengthens the creativity of the person in the future. By mixing the mother tongue with a second foreign language such as German, the individual will discover that he can express himself more creatively in his
mother tongue. You may also find yourself using alternative words, in situations where you will not be able to remember the original words, when you want to express yourself. Learning German as a second language leads to improved creativity and forces the individual to experiment with new words and phrases. It also leads to thinking much more broadly and solving complex problems by exploring alternative options.

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